

**Contracting authority:**

**Italian Agency for Development Cooperation  
(AICS)**

**DigIT - SUPPORT TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR  
THE INFORMATION SOCIETY OF MOZAMBIQUE  
THROUGH TECH-HUBS FOR DIGITAL  
EXCELLENCE – AID 12525**

Guidelines  
for Grant Applicants

Reference: 03/Grant/2023/AICS Maputo/AID 12525

Deadline for submission of concept note and full application:

**30 April 2024 at 12,00 pm** (Maputo date and time)

## Notice

This is an **open call for proposals**, where all documents are submitted together (concept note and full application). In the first instance, only the concept notes will be evaluated. Thereafter, for the lead applicants who have been pre-selected, the full applications will be evaluated. After the evaluation of the full applications, an eligibility check will be performed for those which have been provisionally selected. Eligibility will be checked on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the contracting authority and the signed 'declaration by the lead applicant' sent together with the full application.

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# 1. DIGIT - SUPPORT TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE INFORMATION SOCIETY OF MOZAMBIQUE THROUGH TECH-HUBS FOR DIGITAL EXCELLENCE– AID 12525

## 1.1. BACKGROUND

The initiative will support the Government of Mozambique's efforts towards digital transition, formalised in the "Strategic Plan for the Information Society" (2019-2028), which operationalises the 2018 "Information Society Policy". The action, formulated with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education of Mozambique, which formally requested it, aims to promote innovation and digital transformation for the country's inclusive growth, by developing new digital public utility services, promoting digital entrepreneurship and social innovation, and increasing the digital skills of young people. To this end, the initiative will contribute to the definition and implementation of a model of a tech-hub, which will primarily offer training courses aimed at different targets (users, programmers, workers, with particular attention to girls and persons with disabilities) in the use of digital applications and computer systems, coding (basic and advanced), and other digital skills in line with objectives of the Country's Digital Transformation Plan. The tech-hub will also act as an incubator and accelerator for start-ups and will host and organise competitions (hackathons) for the development of accessible software to provide citizens with improved digital public utility services.

## 1.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME AND PRIORITY ISSUES

The **global objective** of this call for proposals is to “Contribute to the sustainable development of Mozambique through the support to the digital transition of the country”.

The **specific objective** of the action financed through the grant of this call for proposals consists in supporting the Strategic Plan for the Information Society (2019-2028) of the Government of Mozambique through an action aimed at the creation of innovative tools of digital excellence for the improvement of public utility services, the promotion of entrepreneurship and the increase in digital skills.

The priorities (Expected Results) and related Outputs, which this call for proposal will contribute to, are the following:

**Expected Result - ER1:** Increased offer and access to digital services and technologies for productive and social use.

**Output:** Established a Tech Hub of Digital Excellency, using an already existing public facility in the area of Maputo city, managed by a public-private partnership.

**Expected Result – ER2:** Increased digital competencies of young Mozambicans to stimulate innovation, productivity and growth.

**Output:** Young Mozambican people, with a special attention to females and people with disabilities, provided with basic and advanced skills in ICT to grab job opportunities offered by the digital economy.

**Expected Result – ER3:** Reinforced incubation and acceleration of sustainable and inclusive Digital Start-ups.

**Output:** Digital Start-ups (30-35) incubated with technical, legal, and financial support/mentorship to develop their innovative ideas and marketing them in the local ecosystem.

**Expected Result – ER4:** Improved public and private digital services with special attention to people with disabilities.

**Output:** Best social use ideas developed with financial support and delivered to competent institutions.

The identified outputs will be achieved through a set of activities to be proposed by the applicants, among the following:

- Establishing a Tech Hub of Digital Excellency (PTED) using an already existing public facility within the area of Maputo city, managed by a public-private partnership). Creation of such Tech Hub is functional to the implementation of most of activities within the ER2, ER3, and ER4.
  - Renovation/expansion and equipping of the premises identified to host the PTED - minor rehabilitation of existing structures, supply of IT equipment. Includes measures to ensure accessibility of training spaces (physical and/or virtual) to people with disabilities (PwD) of different types, as well as providing software and assistive technologies for full use by the latter (e.g. Braille keyboards, vocal interface, etc..). Spaces are planned to be divided in a flexible and easily modifiable way (offices and open spaces) equipped with accessible office furniture and technological equipment, divided into units of variable size, which will constitute the operational headquarters for many of the expanding micro-businesses, but also rooms for meetings, training, seminars, and networking. Particular attention will be given to low environmental impact infrastructural and technological solutions that enhance energy efficiency and reduce emissions and waste from the facility, once operationalized.
- Tech hub Governance: An MoU will be established and signed by the representatives of the consortium's members, defining roles and responsibility of each member for Tech hub Governance;
- Tech hub management: definition of the business plan, sustainability plan, fund raising plan, communication and marketing plan. Another aspect of PTED will be the investment of resources in terms of networking especially for international networks of tech hubs (e.g. AfriLabs), to encourage the exchange of experiences and the importation of good practices;
- Training and coaching for tech hub staff: organization of direct training for staff on management and development of start-up incubators;
- Awareness campaigns on digital literacy, online safety and STEM disciplines, aimed at young people in the Province of Maputo, especially secondary schools;
- The organization of preparatory digital literacy courses to ensure fair access to courses for users and coders, with special attention to needs of people with disabilities (PwD). These preparatory courses will allow young, interested people who do not yet possess adequate IT skills, to participate in more advanced proposed training courses;
- Creation of inclusive training courses for digital users with particular attention to PwD and girls, on the following topics:
  - Use of social media, hardware maintenance, use of cell phones as a working tool;
  - Digital literacy for study and work activities (Office package, use of the internet);
  - Use of main software for the labour market to increase employability of young people (AutoCAD, business management software, website creation, digital marketing software, data analysis software, etc.).
- Training courses for programmers (coders) on the following topics:
  - accessibility and digital solutions for users with disabilities, digital inclusion, universal design;
  - network security (cyber-security);
  - advanced use of open-source software development tools for creating applications socially relevant, such as Android Studio to create apps for Android and Java devices to create web apps;
  - Courses on creating Android Apps, coding with App Inventor 2 or other similar software, for high schools' students (with a strong focus on girls), in order to stimulate them towards STEM disciplines;
- Intensive advanced courses aimed at ICT technicians on specific topics. These courses are short-term and with a highly specialized content and will be directed at private sector employees or public officials and focused on improving specific skills in the use of coding tools and software. Some examples are Database Modelling, Object Relational Mapping (ORM), Business Intelligence, Data Backup Policies; Cloud Security Policies and other skills specifically requested by the digital market;

- Anyway, a more detailed training offering may be the result of an ecosystem needs assessment and could be updated along the project's implementation;
- Establishment of an Accessibility Fund to facilitate access to courses for people with disabilities, also through a training voucher system. The fund will be made available to most vulnerable students to allow them correct attendance and use of the referred courses (e.g. transport costs, other costs);
- Involvement of the private sector to create internship opportunities for young people to consolidate and improve the skills acquired. This activity involves the promotion and facilitation of dialogue between tech hub and businesses, through events and networking activities, involving them in opening internship opportunities for students who complete the courses offered;
- Identification and selection of startups created by young programmers (30-35 startups throughout the entire initiative) to be incubated, through:
  - Carrying out workshops on the process of creating a start-up, to disseminate the information and stimulate the interest of both young people involved in the courses and of already trained programmers;
  - Organization of innovation and entrepreneurship fairs open to the public to allow an updated analysis of the products/services already on the market and new needs (marketplace of needs), offering students of the courses opportunities to networking with the public and private sector;
- Organization of multi-stage Business Plan Competitions for the identification of most promising digital technologies start-ups, which will be incubated in the tech hub;.
- Pre-incubation (3-6 months) and incubation (3-12 months) of the selected startups (35 in 3 years), through the provision of business development support services at the tech hub:
  - Support/mentorship for the preparation and improvement of startup's business models and business plans
- Periodic organization of short training courses in business management, marketing, control and quality basics;
- Technical support for the development of digital prototypes to be launched on the market;
- Support for the implementation of the business plan (access to financing, registration of patents, business registration);
- Technical, legal, financial and commercial coaching;
- Acceleration (6-12 months) of already existing startups (both those previously incubated and other interested companies) through the provision of business development support services at the Tech Hub;
  - Tutoring and specialized technical support to increase sales and the number of customers and for the attraction of investors;
  - Activation of financial leverage services for the acceleration of the best beneficiary start-ups (crowdfunding, mediation with financial institutions for recapitalization in sight of the expansion of companies that have shown competitiveness, etc.).
  - Creation of networking events to facilitate meetings between PTED startups and the Mozambican and international private sector;
- Carrying out annual consultations with key institutions, civil society entities, organizations of people with disabilities, other stakeholders from different sectors (human education and development, health, agriculture/environment/rural development, social protection, financial services, GEWE etc.), in order to select the issues of greatest social relevance and the digital services of public utility to be introduced or made more accessible and effective (Marketplace of needs and ideas);
- Launching of hackathons for young programmers for the development of new digital services or to improve accessibility and effectiveness of existing ones. Hackathons will allow competing developers to present their ideas and prototypes to solve the priority problems identified by stakeholders in the marketplace of needs and ideas;
- Financing of the development of the best ideas of social utility, which will be acquired by the institutions responsible for their implementation at local and national level. The ideas deemed most valid by the hackathon evaluation commission will be rewarded, accompanying the winning teams in the development of the proposed digital solutions;

All the above activities will be carried out in the tech hub, once created and equipped with the relevant ICT infrastructures.

To avoid unfair competition with local private training centres, some of these activities could be carried out involving them to jointly organize training courses within the PTED, subsidizing costs for the trainees, as well as promoting other activities involving the digital private sector.

## **Beneficiaries**

The expected direct beneficiaries of the action are the following (number of beneficiaries are indicative)<sup>1</sup>:

### **Institutional building**

- 120 public servants (MCTES, INAGE, INTIC, other public institutions);
- 50 university and pre-university professors;
- 100 entrepreneurs/workers;
- 200 civil society representatives.

### **Digital skill transfer**

- 20.000 secondary school students (informed with campaigns on relevance of STEM courses);
- 5.000 university students (made aware with campaigns of opportunities of code training);
- 100 university students trained on advanced coding will participate to hackathons to create start-ups and receive ICT equipment;
- 100 secondary school students (50% women and people with disabilities) trained on coding software and apps for working environments – administration, statistics, autocad, online marketing, etc...);
- 200 university students trained on advanced coding;
- 300 ICT young people updated on advanced ICT themes;
- 40 secondary school students trained on coding with a one-year duration course.

### **Incentives to digital services development**

- 10 young people groups will receive funds to accelerate their projects of digital app development for social services, selected through hackathons.

## **1.3. FINANCIAL ALLOCATION PROVIDED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY**

The overall indicative amount made available under this call for proposals is EUR **2,000,000.00** (two million Euros). The contracting authority reserves the right not to award all available funds.

Annex B, “Budget for the Action”, groups costs in main budget lines, as follow:

1. Human Resources;
2. Travel;
3. PTED setup;
4. Equipment and supplies;
5. Courses, events and incubation services;
6. Project office;
7. Other costs, services;
8. Indirect costs.

The grantee has to create a tech hub that possible adheres to a first draft of a Tech Hub model defined by MCTES, AgID e AICS, which characteristics are reported in the annexed document “DIGIT Tech Hub model

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<sup>1</sup> Applicants may discuss these targets and justify lower or higher numbers

pt”, Annex M. This draft of a Tech hub model will be jointly enriched/contextualized by the Initiative’s experience in the field, in order to improve its sustainability in the Mozambican digital ecosystem.

### **Size of grants**

Any grant requested under this call for proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

- minimum amount: EUR 2,000,000
- maximum amount: EUR 2,000,000

Any grant requested under this call for proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum percentages of total eligible costs of the action:

- Minimum percentage: 100% of the total eligible costs of the action.
- Maximum percentage: 100% of the total eligible costs of the action (see also Section 2.1.4.).

Please note that the grant covers the entire eligible costs of the action, since the balance (i.e., the difference between the total eligible cost of the action and the amount requested from the contracting authority) shall be zero. Therefore, any reduction of the funding or any inclusion of co-funding by the applicants will lead to the rejection of the application.

Any additional support to the initiative, in kind, human resources or fund, that consortia would be keen to supply, should not be included as part of the total budget of the action. For voluntary workers of members of consortia, only operational costs (travels, hotel, per-diem, etc..) will be considered as eligible costs of the action.



## 2. RULES FOR THIS CALL FOR PROPOSALS

These guidelines set out the rules for the submission, selection and implementation of the actions financed under this call, in conformity with the practical guide, which is applicable to the present call (available on the internet at this address <https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/ePRAG> ).

Notice: The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), Maputo Office, is the contracting authority (C.A.) and the funds are availed by the Italian Government. The C.A. adopts for this Call for Proposals the rules set out to discipline the awarding procedures of Grants by the European Commission or by other C.A. for funds of the EU, therefore most of the documents attached to these Guidelines were adapted accordingly, but the Grant Contract General Conditions (ANNEX II e3h2\_gencond\_en) was left in the original version: all the references to the European Commission as C.A. or as responsible for the supervision of the procedure carried out by another C.A. with European funds, need to be interpreted as referring to Italy and its agency AICS as the funder, and to the AICS Maputo Office as the C.A., as specified in the Special Conditions.

### 2.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There are three sets of eligibility criteria, relating to:

(1) the actors (2.1.1.):

- the **‘lead applicant’**, i.e. the entity submitting the application form;
- its **co-applicant(s) (where it is not specified otherwise the lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) are hereinafter jointly referred as ‘applicant(s)’)**;
- and, if any, **affiliated entity(ies)** to the lead applicant and/or to a co-applicant(s);

(2) the actions (2.1.3.):

- actions for which a grant may be awarded;

(3) the costs (2.1.4.):

- types of cost that may be taken into account in setting the amount of the grant.

#### **2.1.1. Eligibility of applicants (i.e., lead applicant and co-applicant(s))**

**Application to the programme’s Call for Proposals may be submitted by consortia, set up by one or more Mozambican public institutions, one or more public or private international institutions with experience in cooperation development’s projects, in ICT education/training and digital start-up creation or tech hub managing, and one or more private sector representative organizations or businesses in the local digital ecosystem.**

#### **Lead applicant**

(1) In order to be eligible for a grant, the lead applicant must:

- be a legal person **and**
- be non-profitmaking **and**
- be established in one of the Member States of the European Union **and**
- be authorized, or provide evidence of capacity to effectively operate in Mozambique **and**

- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies), not acting as an intermediary.

The Lead Applicant shall also:

- demonstrate adequate capacities for planning, monitoring, evaluation, advocacy, communication applicable to the action proposed, and
- demonstrate expertise in similar projects worldwide, if possible, in a developing country. This set of experience and competences may be complemented by co-applicants and/or affiliate entities.

(2) Potential applicants may not participate in calls for proposals or be awarded grants if they are in any of the situations listed in Section 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide;

Lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entities and, in case of legal entities, persons who have powers of representation, decision-making or control over the lead applicant, the co-applicants and the affiliated entities are informed that, should they be in one of the situations of early detection or exclusion according to Section 2.6.10.1 of the practical guide, personal details (name, given name if natural person, address, legal form and name and given name of the persons with powers of representation, decision-making or control, if legal person) may be registered in the early detection and exclusion system, and communicated to the persons and entities concerned in relation to the award or the execution of a grant contract. In this respect, provisionally selected lead applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities or those placed in the reserve list are obliged to declare that they are not in one of the exclusion situations through a signed declaration on honour (PRAG Annex A14). For grants of EUR 15 000 or less, no declaration on honour is required. See Section 2.4.

In Part B Section 8 of the grant application form ('declaration(s) by the lead applicant'), the lead applicant must declare that the lead applicant himself, the co-applicant(s) and affiliated entity(ies) are not in any of these situations.

If awarded the grant contract, the lead applicant will become the beneficiary identified as the coordinator in Annex G (special conditions). The coordinator is the sole interlocutor of the contracting authority. It represents and acts on behalf of any other co-beneficiary (if any) and coordinate the design and implementation of the action.

### **Co-applicant(s)**

Co-applicants participate in designing and implementing the action, and the costs they incur are eligible in the same way as those incurred by the lead applicant.

In order to be eligible for a grant, the co-applicants must:

- be a legal person **and**
- be established in any of the countries belonging to the Organisation for the Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as member countries or eligible for development aid according to the OECD-DAC List of ODA Recipients<sup>2</sup>.

Co-applicants must sign the mandate in Part B Section 4 of the grant application form.

If awarded the grant contract, the co-applicant(s) will become beneficiary(ies) in the action (together with the coordinator).

In addition, please note that contracts cannot be awarded to or signed with applicants included in the lists of EU restrictive measures (see Section 2.4. of the PRAG).

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<sup>2</sup> Please refer to: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>

## **2.1.2. *Affiliated entities***

The lead applicant and its co-applicant(s) may act with affiliated entity(ies). **Only the following entities may be considered as affiliated entities to the lead applicant and/or to co-applicant(s):**

Only entities having a structural link with the applicants (i.e. the lead applicant or a co-applicant), in particular a legal or capital link.

This structural link encompasses mainly two notions:

- (i) Control, as defined in Directive 2013/34/EU on the annual financial statements, consolidated financial statements and related reports of certain types of undertakings:

Entities affiliated to an applicant may hence be:

- Entities directly or indirectly controlled by the applicant (daughter companies or first-tier subsidiaries). They may also be entities controlled by an entity controlled by the applicant (granddaughter companies or second-tier subsidiaries) and the same applies to further tiers of control;
  - Entities directly or indirectly controlling the applicant (parent companies). Likewise, they may be entities controlling an entity controlling the applicant;
  - Entities under the same direct or indirect control as the applicant (sister companies).
- (ii) Membership, i.e. the applicant is legally defined as a e.g. network, federation, association in which the proposed affiliated entities also participate or the applicant participates in the same entity (e.g. network, federation, association...) as the proposed affiliated entities.

The structural link shall, as a general rule, be neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation. This means that the link would exist independently of the award of the grant; it should exist before the call for proposals and remain valid after the end of the action.

By way of exception, an entity may be considered as affiliated to an applicant even if it has a structural link specifically established for the sole purpose of the implementation of the action in the case of so-called 'sole applicants' or 'sole beneficiaries'. A sole applicant or a sole beneficiary is a legal entity formed by several entities (a group of entities) which together comply with the criteria for being awarded the grant. For example, an association is formed by its members.

### What is not an affiliated entity?

The following are not considered entities affiliated to an applicant:

- Entities that have entered into a (procurement) contract or subcontract with an applicant, act as concessionaires or delegates for public services for an applicant,
- Entities that receive financial support from the applicant,
- Entities that cooperate on a regular basis with an applicant on the basis of a memorandum of understanding or share some assets,
- Entities that have signed a consortium agreement under the grant contract (unless this consortium agreement leads to the creation of a 'sole applicant' as described above).

### How to verify the existence of the required link with an applicant?

The affiliation resulting from control may in particular be proved on the basis of the consolidated accounts of the group of entities the applicant and its proposed affiliates belong to.

The affiliation resulting from membership may in particular be proved on the basis of the statutes or equivalent act establishing the entity (network, federation, association) which the applicant constitutes or in which the applicant participates.

If the applicants are awarded a grant contract, their affiliated entity(ies) will not become beneficiary(ies) of the action and signatory(ies) of the grant contract. However, they will participate in the design and in the implementation of the action and the costs they incur (including those incurred for implementation contracts and financial support to third parties and subcontractors) may be accepted as eligible costs, provided they comply with all the relevant rules already applicable to the beneficiary(ies) under the grant contract.

Affiliated entity(ies) must satisfy the same eligibility criteria as the lead applicant and the co-applicant(s). They must sign the affiliated entity(ies) statement in Part B Section 5 of the grant application form.

In addition to the categories referred to in Section 2.1.1, an affiliated entity will be eligible if:

- it is established in any of the countries belonging to the Organisation for the Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) as member countries or eligible for development aid according to the OECD-DAC List of ODA Recipients.<sup>3</sup>

### ***2.1.3. Associates and contractors***

The following entities are not applicants nor affiliated entities and do not have to sign the 'mandate for co-applicant(s)' or 'affiliated entities' statement:

- Associates

Other organisations or individuals may be involved in the action. Such associates play a real role in the action but may not receive funding from the grant, with the exception of per diem or travel costs. Associates do not have to meet the eligibility criteria referred to in Section 2.1.1. Associates must be mentioned in Part B Section 6 — 'Associates participating in the action' — of the grant application form.

They may be linked to any of the central authorities partnering AICS in the programme AID 12525.

- Contractors

The beneficiaries and their affiliated entities are permitted to award contracts. Associates or affiliated entity(ies) cannot be also contractors in the project. Contractors are subject to the procurement rules set out in Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

### ***2.1.4. Eligible actions: actions for which an application may be made***

Definition:

An action is composed of a set of activities.

#### Duration

The initial planned duration of an action may not be lower than 30 months nor exceed 36 months.

#### Sectors or themes

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<sup>3</sup> Please refer to: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/daclist.htm>

Sustainable Development Goal target:

- SDG 5: Gender Equality
- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
- SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

OECD - DAC codes target:

- 16020: Employment creation
  - Micro and small digital business creation, development, support in “incubation” stages
- 22013 Information services - Development of information services
- 22040: Information and Communication Technology
  - Technical assistance to local stakeholders or public bodies in developing countries;
  - IT training;
  - Computer hardware and software

### Location

Actions must take place in the “Grande Maputo” area, Mozambique.

### Types of action

Types of action which may be financed under this call:

- Creation and management of a Tech Hub of Digital Excellency, for skill transfer, Networking and digital startup creation.
- Supporting persons with disabilities to have equal opportunities to access ICT training courses.

The following types of action are ineligible:

- actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences and congresses, not specifically related to Tech Hubs management.
- actions concerned only or mainly with individual scholarships for studies or training courses, unless for people with disabilities

### Types of activity

In Section 1.2 four priorities were established. Proposals shall cover all priorities. A set of activities were proposed as suitable to pursue the four respective expected results and may be financed under this call, with possible integrations and changes as deemed appropriate by the applicant.

### Financial support to third parties<sup>4</sup>

Applicants may propose financial support to third parties.

Applicants may propose financial support to third parties in order to help achieving the objectives of the action.

The maximum amount of financial support per third party is EUR 60 000 except where achieving the objectives of the actions would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult, in which case this threshold can be exceeded. A threshold below EUR 60 000 can be set if appropriate.

In compliance with the present guidelines and notably of any conditions or restrictions in this Section, the lead applicant should define mandatorily in Section 2.1.1 of the grant application form:

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<sup>4</sup> These third parties are neither affiliated entity(ies) nor associates nor contractors.

- (i) the overall objectives, the specific objective(s) and the outputs<sup>5</sup> (i.e. the results) to be achieved with the financial support
- (ii) the different types of activities eligible for financial support, on the basis of a fixed list
- (iii) the types of persons or categories of persons which may receive financial support
- (iv) the criteria for selecting these entities and giving the financial support
- (v) the criteria for determining the exact amount of financial support for each third entity, and
- (vi) the maximum amount which may be given.

In all events, the mandatory conditions set above for giving financial support (points (i) to (vi)) have to be strictly defined in the grant contract as to avoid any exercise of discretion.

### Visibility

Applicants must take all necessary steps to publicise the fact that the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) has financed the action. Actions that are wholly funded by AICS must incorporate information and communication activities designed to raise the awareness of specific or general audiences of the reasons for the action and the support from AICS for the action in the country or region concerned, as well as the results and the impact of this support.

All measures and activities relating to visibility and communication must comply with the latest Communication and Visibility Requirements for AICS-funded action, laid down and published on the AICS website (<https://www.aics.gov.it/home-ita/settori/linee-guida>).

### Number of applications and grants per applicants / affiliated entities

The lead applicant may not submit more than 1 application under this call for proposals.

The lead applicant may not be a co-applicant or an affiliated entity in another application at the same time.

A co-applicant/affiliated entity may not be the co-applicant or affiliated entity in more than 1 application under this call for proposals.

### ***2.1.5. Eligibility of costs: costs that can be included***

AICS contributions under this call for proposals take the following form:

- Reimbursement of eligible costs based on actual costs incurred by the beneficiary(ies) and affiliated entity(ies).

Only 'eligible costs' can be covered by the grant. The categories of costs that are eligible and non-eligible are indicated below. The budget is both a cost estimate and an overall ceiling for 'eligible costs'.

Recommendations to award a grant are always subject to the condition that the checks preceding the signing of the grant contract do not reveal problems requiring changes to the budget (such as arithmetical errors, inaccuracies, unrealistic costs and ineligible costs). The checks may give rise to requests for clarification and may lead the contracting authority to impose modifications or reductions to address such mistakes or inaccuracies. It is not possible to increase the grant as a result of these corrections.

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<sup>5</sup> As per OECD DAC definition, the term 'results' includes 'impact' (overall objective), 'outcome(s)' (specific objective(s)) and 'output(s)'.

It is therefore in the applicants' interest to provide a **realistic and cost-effective budget**.

#### Eligible direct costs

To be eligible under this call for proposals, costs must comply with the provisions of Article 14 of the general conditions to the standard grant contract (see Annex G of the guidelines).

The applicants (and where applicable their affiliated entities) agree that the expenditure verification(s) referred to in Article 15.7 of the general conditions to the standard grant contract (see Annex G of the guidelines) will be carried out by the contracting authority or any external body authorised by AICS.

#### Contingency reserve

The budget may include a contingency reserve not exceeding 5% of the estimated direct eligible costs. It can only be used with the **prior written authorisation** of the contracting authority.

#### Eligible indirect costs

The indirect costs incurred in carrying out the action may be eligible for flat rate funding, but the total must not exceed 7% of the estimated total eligible direct costs. Indirect costs are eligible provided that they do not include costs assigned to another budget heading in the standard grant contract. The lead applicant may be asked to justify the percentage requested before the grant contract is signed. However, once the flat rate has been fixed in the special conditions of the grant contract, no supporting documents need to be provided.

If any of the applicants or affiliated entity(ies) is in receipt of an operating grant financed by the EU, it may not claim indirect costs on its incurred costs within the proposed budget for the action.

#### Ineligible costs

The following costs are not eligible:

- debts and debt service charges (interest);
- provisions for losses or potential future liabilities;
- costs declared by the beneficiary(ies) and financed by another action or work programme receiving an AICS grant or contribution;
- purchases of land or buildings, except where necessary for the direct implementation of the action, in which case ownership must be transferred in accordance with Article 7.5 of the general conditions of the standard grant contract, at the latest at the end of the action;
- currency exchange losses;
- in kind contributions;
- bonuses included in costs of staff;
- negative interest charged by banks or other financial institutions;
- VAT, except in specific cases for costs incurred in Mozambique;<sup>6</sup>
- credit to third parties;
- salary costs of the personnel of national administrations.

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<sup>6</sup> VAT in any other country is ineligible. For costs incurred in Mozambique, VAT may be eligible unless the deliverables of the activities benefit from the provisions set by Decree n. 66 of 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017 of the Government of Mozambique and subsequent updates (*Mecanismo Fiscal de Regularização do IVA suportado nas aquisições de bens e serviços no âmbito de projectos públicos financiados por instituições financeiras internacionais e parceiros de desenvolvimento*).

## **2.1.6. Ethics clauses and Code of Conduct**

All beneficiaries of the grant shall strictly comply with all the provisions of both the AICS Code of Ethics and Conduct ([here in English](#), [qui in Italiano](#), [aqui em português](#)) and the AICS PSEAH Code ([here in English](#), [qui in Italiano](#)).

In particular, the following principles apply.

### a) Absence of conflict of interest

The applicant must not be affected by any conflict of interest and must have no equivalent relation in that respect with other applicants or parties involved in the actions. Any attempt by an applicant to obtain confidential information, enter into unlawful agreements with competitors or influence the evaluation committee or the contracting authority during the process of examining, clarifying, evaluating and comparing applications will lead to the rejection of its application and may result in administrative penalties according to the Financial Regulation in force.

### b) Respect for human rights as well as environmental legislation and core labour standards

The applicant and its staff must comply with human rights. In particular, and in accordance with the applicable act, applicants who have been awarded contracts must comply with the environmental legislation including multilateral environmental agreements, and with the core labour standards as applicable and as defined in the relevant International Labour Organisation conventions (such as the conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining; elimination of forced and compulsory labour; abolition of child labour).

### **Zero tolerance for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment**

The European Commission applies a policy of 'zero tolerance' in relation to all wrongful conduct which has an impact on the professional credibility of the applicant.

Physical abuse or punishment, or threats of physical abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation, harassment and verbal abuse, as well as other forms of intimidation shall be prohibited.

Applicants (and affiliated entities) other than (i) natural persons, (ii) pillar-assessed entities and (iii) governments and other public bodies, whose application has been provisionally selected or placed in a reserve list shall assess their internal policy against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEA-H) through a self-evaluation questionnaire (Annex L). For grants of EUR 60 000 or less no self-evaluation is required. Such self-evaluation questionnaire is not part of the evaluation of the full application by the contracting authority, but is an administrative requirement. See Section 2.5.6 of the PRAG.

### c) Anti-corruption and anti-bribery

The applicant shall comply with all applicable laws, regulations and codes relating to anti-bribery and anti-corruption. The contracting authority reserves the right to suspend or cancel project financing if corrupt practices of any kind are discovered at any stage of the award process or during the execution of a contract and if the contracting authority fails to take all appropriate measures to remedy the situation. For the purposes of this provision, 'corrupt practices' are the offer of a bribe, gift, gratuity or commission to any person as an inducement or reward for performing or refraining from any act relating to the award of a contract or execution of a contract already concluded with the contracting authority.

### d) Unusual commercial expenses

Applications will be rejected or contracts terminated if it emerges that the award or execution of a contract has given rise to unusual commercial expenses. Such unusual commercial expenses are commissions not mentioned in the main contract or not stemming from a properly concluded contract referring to the main contract, commissions not paid in return for any actual and legitimate service, commissions remitted to a



tax haven, commissions paid to a payee who is not clearly identified or commissions paid to a company which has every appearance of being a front company.

e) Breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud

The contracting authority reserves the right to suspend or cancel the procedure, where the award procedure proves to have been subject to breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud. If breach of obligations, irregularities or fraud are discovered after the award of the contract, the contracting authority may refrain from concluding the contract.

## 2.2. HOW TO APPLY AND THE PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW

### 2.2.1. *Application forms*

Applications must be submitted in accordance with the instructions on the concept note and the full applications in the grant application form annexed to these guidelines (Annex A). Lead applicants should then keep strictly to the format of the grant application form and fill in the paragraphs and pages in order.

Applicants must apply in English or Portuguese.

Please complete the full application form carefully and as clearly as possible so that it can be assessed properly.

Any error or major discrepancy related to the points listed in the instructions on the concept note or any major inconsistency in the application (e.g. if the amounts in the budget worksheets are inconsistent) may lead to the rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested when the information provided is unclear and thus prevents the contracting authority from conducting an objective assessment.

Please note that only the grant application form and the published annexes which have to be filled in (budget, logical framework) will be evaluated. It is therefore of utmost importance that these documents contain ALL the relevant information concerning the action.

Moreover, the consortium must produce a signed agreement among all members, specifying each member's role and commitment to the implementation of the programme.

**No additional annexes should be sent.**

### 2.2.2. *Where and how to send applications*

Grant applications must be submitted by e-mail to the address below:

[Maputo@aics.gov.it](mailto:Maputo@aics.gov.it)

Applications sent by any other means or delivered to other addresses will be rejected.

The e-mail subject must bear the **reference number of the call for proposals “03/Grant/2023/AICS Maputo/AID 12525”, together with the name or acronym of the lead applicant**. The e-mail must indicate the list of Annexes that are attached.

Each Annex should be attached as a separate file, as follows:

**Annex A:** Grant application form, in **PDF/A -searchable-** and **Word format**.

**Annex B:** Budget in **PDF/A -searchable-** and **Excel format**.

**Annex C:** Logical framework in **PDF/A -searchable-** format.

**Applicants are advised to verify that their application is complete using the checklist (Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form). Incomplete applications may be rejected.**

### 2.2.3. *Deadline for submission of applications*

The applicants' attention is drawn to the fact that the only system for sending applications is **by e-mail**, to the address provided above.

The deadline for the submission of applications is **30 April 2024 at 12,00 pm (noon), Maputo time**. The date/time of receipt of the complete application recorded by the e-mail server [maputo@aics.gov.it](mailto:maputo@aics.gov.it) will be considered. Any application submitted after the deadline will automatically be rejected.

#### **2.2.4. Further information about applications**

Online information sessions on this call for proposals will be held on:

- 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 2.30 pm (Maputo time)
- 20<sup>h</sup> February 2024 at 2.30 pm (Maputo time)

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 21 days before the deadline for the submission of applications to the below address(es), indicating clearly the reference of the call for proposals:

E-mail address: [maputo@aics.gov.it](mailto:maputo@aics.gov.it)

The contracting authority has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

Replies will be given no later than 11 days before the deadline for the submission of applications.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

Questions that may be relevant to other applicants, together with the answers, will be published on the website of AICS Maputo (<http://maputo.aics.gov.it>), as the need arises. It is therefore advisable to consult the abovementioned website regularly in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

Please note that the contracting authority may decide to cancel the call for proposals procedure at any stage according to the conditions set out in Section 6.5.9 of the PRAG.

### **2.3. EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS**

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the contracting authority with the possible assistance of external assessors. All applications will be assessed according to the following steps and criteria.

If the examination of the application reveals that the proposed action does not meet the eligibility criteria stated in Section 2.1, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

#### **(1) STEP 1: OPENING & ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKS AND CONCEPT NOTE EVALUATION**

During the opening and administrative check the following will be assessed:

- If the deadline has been met. Otherwise, the application will be automatically rejected.
- If the application satisfies all the criteria specified in the checklist in Section 7 of Part B of the grant application form. This includes also an assessment of the eligibility of the action. If any of the requested information is missing or is incorrect, the application may be rejected on that **sole** basis and the application will not be evaluated further.

The concept notes that pass this check will be evaluated on the relevance and design of the proposed action.

The concept notes will receive an overall score out of 50 using the breakdown in the evaluation grid below. The evaluation will also check on compliance with the instructions on how to complete the concept note, which can be found in Part A of the grant application form.

The evaluation criteria are divided into headings and subheadings. Each subheading will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

<b>1. Relevance of the action</b>	Sub-score	<b>20</b>
1.1 Given the detailed description and articulation of the objectives and priorities of the call for proposals, how closely and comprehensively does the proposal cover the specific themes/sectors/areas or any other specific requirement stated in the guidelines for applicants? Are the expected results of the action strictly aligned with the priorities defined in the guidelines for applicants (Section 1.2), or competently discussed and appropriately revised?	5	
1.2 Does the proposal reveal that the particular needs and constraints of the target country(ies), region(s) and/or relevant sectors (including synergy with other development initiatives and avoidance of duplication) are clear to the applicants? Have the needs of the beneficiaries (as rights holders and/or duty bearers) and constraints been clearly understood, or discussed and redefined, and does the proposal address them appropriately?	5	
1.3 How clearly defined, appropriate to the programme and strategically chosen is(are) the facility(ies) where the tech hub will be established? Is(are) it(they) likely or suitable to address the needs of final beneficiaries / target groups?	5	
1.4 Does the proposal contain particular added-value elements (e.g. innovation, best practices and the other additional elements indicated under 2.1.4 of the guidelines for applicants)?	5	
<b>2. Design of the action</b>	Sub-score	<b>30</b>
2.1 How coherent is the overall design of the action?  Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action and, in case they substantially differ from the ones proposed in the Guidelines for Applicants, are clear and solid reasons provided? Does the intervention logic explain the rationale to achieve the expected results?	5x2**	
2.2 Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, confirming the approach adopted in the Call for Proposals or proposing a different one, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5	
2.3 Does the design take into account external factors (risks and assumptions)?	5	
2.4 Are the activities feasible and consistent in relation to the expected results (including timeframe)? Are results (output, outcome and impact) realistic, also in consideration of the total budget?	5	
2.5 To which extent does the proposal integrate relevant cross-cutting elements such as environmental/climate change issues, promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, needs of disabled people, rights of minorities, youth?	5	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>		<b>50</b>

\* Note: A score of 5 (very good) will only be allocated if the proposal specifically addresses all the required priorities as indicated in Section 1.2 (objectives of the programme) of these guidelines.

\*\* This score is multiplied by 2 because of its importance.

Once all concept notes have been assessed, a list will be drawn up with the proposed actions ranked according to their total score.

Firstly, only the concept notes with a score of at least 30 will be considered for pre-selection.

Secondly, the number of concept notes will be reduced, taking account of the ranking, to the number of concept notes whose total aggregate amount of requested contributions is equal to 500% of the available budget for this call for proposals, i.e. 5 (five) proposals.

After the evaluation of concept notes, the contracting authority will send letters to all lead applicants, indicating whether their application was submitted by the deadline, informing them of the reference number they have been allocated, whether the concept note was evaluated and the results of that evaluation. The evaluation committee will then proceed with the lead applicants whose proposals have been pre-selected.

## **(2) EVALUATION OF THE FULL APPLICATION**

If the applications pass the opening and administrative checks along the instructions of the Step 1: they will be further evaluated on their quality, including the proposed budget and capacity of the applicants and affiliated entity(ies). They will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the evaluation grid below. There are two types of evaluation criteria: selection and award criteria.

**The selection criteria** help to evaluate the applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s operational capacity and the lead applicant's financial capacity and are used to verify that they:

- have stable and sufficient sources of finance to maintain their activity throughout the proposed action and, where appropriate, to participate in its funding (this only applies to lead applicants);
- have the management capacity, professional competencies and qualifications required to successfully complete the proposed action. This applies to applicants and any affiliated entity(ies).

**The award criteria** help to evaluate the quality of the applications in relation to the objectives and priorities set forth in the guidelines, and to award grants to projects which maximise the overall effectiveness of the call for proposals. They help to select applications which the contracting authority can be confident will comply with its objectives and priorities. They cover the relevance of the action, its consistency with the objectives of the call for proposals, quality, expected impact, sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

*Scoring:*

The evaluation grid is divided into Sections and subsections. Each subsection will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = adequate; 4 = good; 5 = very good.

## Evaluation grid

Section	Maximum Score
<b>1. Financial and operational capacity</b>	<b>20</b>
1.1 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house experience of project management?	5
1.2 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house technical expertise? (especially knowledge of the issues to be addressed)	5
1.3 Do the applicants and, if applicable, their affiliated entity(ies) have sufficient in-house management capacity? (Including staff, equipment and ability to handle the budget for the action)?	5
1.4 Does the lead applicant have stable and sufficient sources of finance?	5
<b>2. Relevance</b>	<b>20</b>
<i>Score transferred from the Concept Note evaluation</i>	
<b>3. Design of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1 How coherent is the design of the action? Does the proposal indicate the expected results to be achieved by the action? Does the intervention logic explain the rationale to achieve the expected results? Are the activities proposed appropriate, practical, and consistent with the envisaged outputs and outcome(s)?	5
3.2 Does the proposal/Logical Framework assess the need for a credible baseline, targets and sources of verification? If not, is a baseline study for some indicators foreseen or is a justification provided for skipping this normal step? If a baseline survey is included, is it budgeted appropriately in the proposal?	5
3.3 Does the design reflect a robust analysis of the problems involved, and the capacities of the relevant stakeholders?	5
<b>4. Implementation approach</b>	<b>15</b>
4.1 Is the action plan for implementing the action clear and feasible? Is the timeline realistic?	5
4.2 Does the proposal include an effective and efficient monitoring system? Is there an evaluation planned (previous, during or/and at the end of the implementation)?	5
4.3 Is the co-applicant(s)'s and affiliated entity(ies)'s level of involvement and participation in the action satisfactory?	5
<b>5. Sustainability of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
5.1 Is the action likely to have a tangible impact on its target groups?	5

5.2 Is the action likely to have multiplier effects, including scope for replication, extension, capitalisation on experience and knowledge sharing?	5
5.3 Are the expected results of the proposed action sustainable?  - Financially ( <i>e.g. financing of follow-up activities, sources of revenue for covering all future operating and maintenance costs</i> )  - Institutionally ( <i>will structures allow the results of the action to be sustained at the end of the action? Will there be local 'ownership' of the results of the action?</i> )  - At policy level (where applicable) ( <i>what will be the structural impact of the action — e.g. improved legislation, codes of conduct, methods</i> )  - Environmentally (if applicable) ( <i>will the action have a negative/positive environmental impact?</i> )	5
<b>6. Budget and cost-effectiveness of the action</b>	<b>15</b>
6.1 Are the activities appropriately reflected in the budget?	/ 5
6.2 Is the ratio between the estimated costs and the results satisfactory?	/ 10
<b>Maximum total score</b>	<b>100</b>

If the total score for Section 1 (financial and operational capacity) is less than 12 points, the application will be rejected. If the score for at least one of the subsections under Section 1 is 1, the application will also be rejected.

If the lead applicant applies without co-applicants or affiliated entities the score for point 4.3 shall be 5 unless the involvement of co-applicants or affiliated entities is mandatory according to these guidelines for applicants.

#### *Provisional selection*

After the evaluation, a table will be drawn up listing the applications ranked according to their score. The highest scoring applications will be provisionally selected until the available budget for this call for proposals is reached. In addition, a reserve list will be drawn up following the same criteria. This list will be used if more funds become available during the validity period of the reserve list.

### **(3) STEP 3: VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF THE APPLICANTS AND AFFILIATED ENTITY(IES)**

The eligibility verification will be performed on the basis of the supporting documents requested by the contracting authority (see Section 2.4). It will by default only be performed for the applications that have been provisionally selected according to their score and within the available budget for this call for proposals.

- The declaration by the lead applicant (Section 8 of Part B of the grant application form) will be cross-checked with the supporting documents provided by the lead applicant. Any missing supporting document or any incoherence between the declaration by the lead applicant and the supporting documents may lead to the rejection of the application on that sole basis.
- The eligibility of applicants and the affiliated entity(ies) will be verified according to the criteria set out in Section 2.1.1, 2.1.2.

Any rejected application will be replaced by the next best placed application on the reserve list that falls within the available budget for this call for proposals.



## 2.4. SUBMISSION OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

A lead applicant whose application has been provisionally selected or placed on the reserve list will be informed in writing by the contracting authority. It will be requested to supply the following documents in order to allow the contracting authority to verify the eligibility of the lead applicant, (if any) of the co-applicant(s) and (if any) of their affiliated entity(ies):

1. The statutes or articles of association of the lead applicant, (if any) of each co-applicant and (if any) of each affiliated entity. Where the contracting authority has recognised the lead applicant's, or the co-applicant(s)'s, or their affiliated entity(ies)'s eligibility for another call for proposals under the same budget line within 2 years before the deadline for receipt of applications, it should be submitted, instead of the statutes or articles of association, a copy of the document proving their eligibility in a former call (e.g. a copy of the special conditions of a grant contract received during the reference period), unless a change in legal status has occurred in the meantime. This obligation does not apply to international organisations which have signed a framework agreement with the European Commission.
2. Legal entity form (see Annex D of these guidelines) duly completed and signed by each of the applicants (i.e. by the lead applicant and by each co-applicant, if any), accompanied by the justifying documents requested there. If the applicants have already signed a contract with the contracting authority, instead of the legal entity sheet and supporting documents, the legal entity number may be provided, unless a change in legal status occurred in the meantime.
3. A financial identification form of the lead applicant (not from co-applicant(s)) conforming to the model attached as Annex E of these guidelines, certified by the bank to which the payments will be made. This bank should be located in the country where the lead applicant is established. If the lead applicant has already submitted a financial identification form in the past for a contract where the European Commission was in charge of the payments and intends to use the same bank account, a copy of the previous financial identification form may be provided instead.
4. Declaration on honour: the lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities shall fill in and sign the declaration on honour certifying that they are not in one of the exclusion situations (see Section 2.6.10.1 of the PRAG) where the amount of the grant exceeds EUR 15 000. The declaration on honour shall be dated and signed, either by hand or by applying a qualified electronic signature (QES)<sup>7</sup> by an authorised representative of the signatory.
5. Self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H: the lead applicant as well as all co-applicants and affiliated entities shall fill in the self-evaluation questionnaire assessing the organisation's internal policy and procedure against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEA-H) (Annex L) where the amount of grant exceeds EUR 60 000 (see Section 2.5.6 of the PRAG).<sup>8</sup>

In addition, for the purpose of the evaluation of the financial capacity, the following documents should be submitted:<sup>9</sup>

6. For action grants exceeding EUR 750 000 and for operating grants above EUR 100 000, the lead applicant must provide an audit report produced by an approved external auditor where it is available, and always in cases where a statutory audit is required by EU or national law. That report shall certify the accounts for up to the last three available financial years. In all other cases, the applicant shall provide a self-declaration signed by its authorised representative certifying the validity of its accounts for up to the last three available financial years. Such self-declaration shall

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<sup>7</sup> Please note that only the QES within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 (eIDAS Regulation) will be accepted. Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market and repealing Directive 1999/93/EC.

<sup>8</sup> Applicants, co-applicants and affiliated entities who are (i) natural persons (ii) pillar-assessed entities and (iii) governments and other public bodies do not have to submit the self-evaluation questionnaire.

<sup>9</sup> No supporting documents will be requested for applications for a grant not exceeding EUR 60 000.

be dated and signed, either by hand or by applying a qualified electronic signature (QES)<sup>10</sup> by an authorised representative of the signatory.

This requirement shall apply only to the first application made by a beneficiary the same contracting authority in any one financial year.

The external audit report is not required from the co-applicant(s) or affiliated entities (if any).

This obligation does not apply to pillar assessed entities.

This obligation does not apply to secondary and higher education establishments.

Documents must be supplied in the form of originals, photocopies or scanned versions (i.e. showing legible stamps, signatures and dates) of the said originals.

Where these documents are in a language **other than English, Italian or Portuguese**, a translation into English or Portuguese of the relevant parts of these documents proving the lead applicant's and, where applicable, co-applicants' and affiliated entity(ies)' eligibility, must be attached for the purpose of analysing the application.

If the abovementioned supporting documents are not provided before the deadline indicated in the request for supporting documents sent to the lead applicant by the contracting authority, the application may be rejected.

After verifying the supporting documents, the evaluation committee will make a final recommendation to the contracting authority, which will decide on the award of grants.

NB: In the eventuality that the contracting authority is not satisfied with the strength, solidity, and guarantee offered by the structural link between one of the applicants and its affiliated entity, it can require the submission of the missing documents allowing for its conversion into co-applicant. If all the missing documents for co-applicants are submitted, and provided all necessary eligibility criteria are fulfilled, the above-mentioned entity becomes a co-applicant for all purposes. The lead applicant has to submit the application form revised accordingly.

## **2.5. NOTIFICATION OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION**

### ***2.5.1. Content of the decision***

The lead applicants will be informed in writing of the contracting authority's decision concerning their application and, if rejected, the reasons for the negative decision. Please note that the lead applicant is the intermediary for all communications between applicants and the contracting authority during the procedure.

An applicant believing that it has been harmed by an error or irregularity during the award process may lodge a complaint to AICS, Agenzia Italiana per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo, Via Cantalupo in Sabina 29, 00191 ROMA (Italy) – Tel. +39 06 324921.

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<sup>10</sup> Please note that only the QES within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 (eIDAS Regulation) will be accepted. Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market and repealing Directive 1999/93/EC.

### 2.5.2. Indicative timetable

	DATE	TIME
<b>1. Information meeting (if any)</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	2.30 pm (Maputo time)
	20 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	2.30 pm (Maputo time)
<b>2. Deadline for requesting any clarifications from the contracting authority</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	4.00 pm (Maputo time)
<b>3. Last date on which clarifications are issued by the contracting authority</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	-
<b>4. Deadline for submission of applications</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> April 2024</b>	<b>12.00 pm – noon (Maputo time)</b>
<b>5. Information to lead applicants on opening, administrative checks and concept note evaluation (Step 1)</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	-
<b>7. Information to lead applicants on the evaluation of the full applications (Step 2)</b>	31 <sup>th</sup> May 2024	-
<b>8. Notification of award (after the eligibility check) (Step 3)</b>	10 June 2024	-
<b>9. Contract signature</b>	20 June 2024	-

All times are in the time zone of the country of the contracting authority.

This indicative timetable refers to provisional dates (except for dates 2, 3, and 4) and may be updated by the contracting authority during the procedure. In such cases, the updated timetable will be published on the web site where the call was published: AICS Maputo Office [website](#).

### 2.6. CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AFTER THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY'S DECISION TO AWARD A GRANT

Following the decision to award a grant, the beneficiary(ies) will be offered a contract based on the standard grant contract (see Annex G of these guidelines). By signing the application form (Annex A of these guidelines), the applicants agree, if awarded a grant, to accept the contractual conditions of the standard grant contract. Where the coordinator is an organisation whose pillars have been positively assessed, it will sign a contribution agreement based on the contribution agreement template. In this case, references to provisions of the standard grant contract and its annexes shall not apply. References in these guidelines to the grant contract shall be understood as references to the relevant provisions of the contribution agreement.

#### Implementation contracts

Where implementation of the action requires the beneficiary(ies) and its affiliated entity(ies) (if any) to award procurement contracts, those contracts must be awarded in accordance with Annex IV to the standard grant contract.

In this context, a distinction should be made between awarding implementation contracts and subcontracting parts of the action described in the proposal, i.e. the description of the action annexed to the grant contract, such subcontracting being subject to additional restrictions (see the general terms and conditions in the model grant contract).

Awarding implementation contracts: implementation contracts relate to the acquisition by beneficiaries of routine services and/or necessary goods and equipment as part of their project management; they do not cover any outsourcing of tasks forming part of the action that are described in the proposal, i.e. in the description of the action annexed to the grant contract.

Subcontracting: subcontracting is the implementation, by a third party with which one or more beneficiaries have concluded a procurement contract, of specific tasks forming part of the action as described in annex to the grant contract (see also the general terms and conditions in the model grant contract).

### 3. LIST OF ANNEXES

#### DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED

(With the application form by the submission deadline indicated above)

Annex A: Grant application form (Word format) ✓

Annex B: Budget (Excel format) ✓

Annex C: Logical framework (Excel format) ✓

(after the full proposals evaluation:)

Annex D: Legal entity form ✓

Annex E: Financial identification form ✓

#### DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION<sup>11</sup>

Annex G: Standard grant contract ✓

- Annex II: general conditions ✓

- Annex IV: procurement rules for beneficiary(ies) - *Note that this document of the EU (PRAG) was partially adapted to suit the Contracting Authority AICS* ✓

- Annex V: standard request for payment ✓

- Annex VI: model narrative and financial report (3 documents) ✓

- Annex VII: model report of factual findings and terms of reference for an expenditure verification of an AICS-financed grant contract for external action (2 documents) ✓

- Annex VIII: model financial guarantee ✓

- Annex IX: standard template for transfer of ownership of assets ✓

Annex J: Information on the tax regime applicable to grant contracts signed under the call. ✓

Annex H: Declaration on Honour ✓

Annex L: Self-evaluation questionnaire on SEA-H ✓

Annex M: DIGIT Tech Hub Model pt ✓

#### Useful links:

##### Project Cycle Management Guidelines

[https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/managing-project\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/funding/managing-project_en)

##### The implementation of grant contracts

##### A Users' Guide

<https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=48169235>

##### Financial Toolkit

[https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/financial-management-toolkit\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/financial-management-toolkit_en)

Please note: the toolkit is not part of the grant contract and has no legal value. It merely provides general guidance and may in some details differ from the signed grant contract. In order to ensure compliance with

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<sup>11</sup> These documents should also be published by the contracting authority.

their contractual obligations beneficiaries should not exclusively rely on the toolkit but always consult their individual contract documents.

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